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## Guru Nanak Dev Mission Series 237

# Human being-Ray of Divine Light

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## **Human being-Ray of Divine Light**

In spite of the multiplicity of creeds, a concept of common motive for the origin of various religions was unknown, prior to the birth of Guru Nanak. Rather people used to fight to death and even perpetrate atrocities in the name of religion. Guru Nanak started and continued preaching, "Benefactor of all creatures is One and I can never forget Him "

'Guru Nanak's religion is a cathedral of universal Faith and experience of Truth, in which every human being and every Seeker of Truth can seek inspiration and divine wisdom, provided he does not sin against light and does not refuse the grace inwardly offered to him. Members of all spiritual families can imbibe the eternal values of this religion without giving up their racial, national and cultural individuality and be illumined by the splendours of God's existence & Truth'(Dr. Trilochan Singh. 'Guru Nanak His life, time & teachings' p-113)

A higher charity is to impart intellectual knowledge and wisdom and remove the ignorance of the people. But the highest charity is the awakening of spiritual consciousness in a person and imprint the love of God.

(Bhai Mani Singh).

Kabir said, "where there is knowledge, there is righteousness."

(Kabir : Adi Granth, p-1372),

'Guru Nanak wanted virtue to spread through social activities of virtuous people. Guru Nanak was a creator and innovator, with an incisive mind. His revolutionary transvaluation of the values made him a link between yesterday and tomorrow of human destiny and mediator between antagonistic cultures and civilizations.' (Dr. Tirlochan Singh. "Guru Nanak His life, time and teachings pp. 78-79). According to him out of millions created by God, man is the only creature who seeks an ultimate meaning of existence and only he has purpose, freedom of will and a spark of responsibility. Thus man is the mediator between God and the World. So Guru Nanak set about chalking out a line of action for man, by preaching on the following lines :

1. The first step towards the attainment of this goal was to preach 'worship of only one God', who can be remembered by any name (Muslim, Hindu, Christian or any other religious name) or just called father or 'Malik', so that we can feel the oneness of humanity and realize the futility of any caste racial or geographical differences for attainment of the ultimate goal, realization of self and merging of self with God. External physical and environmental differences camouflage the 'internal self', the 'soul' which is a disintegrated bit of the whole. 'God'. Hence merging into its source is the aim of the soul. When one constantly thinks of His virtues, one would reach a stage where one's mind will not consider anyone alien and will see God in every body.

According to Guru Nanak, ultimate reality is the One Absolute, the Eternal, the Self-existent Being who

cannot be defined in human words. All the universe has been created by a simple act of His Will.

"In all the realms His spirit pervades; Above it abides the Absolute, Exalted, Self-Existent in silence and ecstasy."

(Guru Nanak "Adi Granth Maru p. 939)

"God created Himself, and assumed a name, Second besides Himself He created Nature. Seated in nature He watches with delight what He creates".

(Guru Nanak, 'Adi Granth' Asa-di-Var—1:3)

According to the knowledge that we possess at the moment, mono-theism was first preached by Pharaoh Amenophis IV (1380—1362 BC) of Egypt. In one of his hymns to supreme God Atov, he says,

'How much is there that Thou hast made, and that is hidden from me, Thou sole God, to whom none is to be likened ! Thou hast fashioned the earth according to Thy desire, Thou alone with men, cattle and wild beasts, all that is upon the earth and goeth upon feet and all that soareth above and flieth with its wings.'

The lands of Syria and Nubia and the land of Egypt Thou puttest every man in his place and then suppliest their needs. Each one hath his provisions and his life time is reckoned.

(Erman, "The literature of ancient Egyptians". Methuen, London, 1927, p-220)

The Jews, the Christians and the Muslims also believed in one God, but that belief in one True God, was not as ardent and overpowering as Guru Nanak's could have been communicated in any sense of manner.

(Dr. M.Majeeb. 'Guru Nanak His life time and teachings.' p-116, 1981)

Islam no doubt ordains an egalitarian society and equality of all men before God is their belief. but division on the basis of races and descent was recognized. (ibid, p-119) The equality advocated by the 'bhagats' (of Bhakti movement in India) was more spiritual, than social, It depended for its acceptance on the good sense of man, not on a clear and absolute command of God, the God of all mankind; The form in which Guru Nanak preached the equality of men could only be an occurrence of heart, intimately connected with his belief in one God.

(ibid—p-119)

2. Guru Nanak sang the songs of Divine Love. Out of fullness of heart flared his message—the message of love of God, brotherhood of man and the law of love in all human relations. He spread his message in language intelligible to the ordinary man, which henceforth. came to be known as, 'Gurbani', It has ever since brought comfort and peace to mankind in movements of stress and strain misery and death. Its immortal appeal to the heart has continued to uplift humanity. The unsurpassed gift of 'Gurbani' is one of the enduring contributions of Guru Nanak to India and the world. His teachings are through & through non-sectarian in character His approach to inter-religious relations is still valid and very much needed today.

(Dr K L Sheshagiri Rao 'Guru Nanak, his life, time and

teachings'—page—116, 1981)

3. Guru Nanak said, "there are innumerable universes; in each of the universes there are planets. Most of these planets have supercivilizations and bad civilizations. And each civilization had its own prophets and religions. Thus there are millions of earths like this one, and millions of prophets like Krishna, Buddha, Mohammed & Christ working for the salvation of humanity on those planets. This scientific truth was propounded five centuries ago when it was beyond the speculation of scientists. Though partly confirmed, some of it is still being researched and some beyond imagination even now.

According to Guru Nanak around the Supreme Being, there was darkness and void. God illumined and filled this void with His creation and sustained it by His light. Out of this all pervasive light emerged the four existential elements, (air, water, earth, fire) which are antagonistic in spirit but were united into material existence through the fifth principle, the 'life power' (unseen life spirit). Bhagat Kabir echoes the same thought; "First God radiated light; every one belongs to nature; the whole creation originated from that light; who is good then who is bad?" thus confirming the single divine source of humanity and millions of creatures made by God. Acceptance of this idea cuts through the very roots of the concept of division of humanity on the basis of creed, caste, ethnic and domiciliary differences. Now the scientists have also proved that all the forces of nature, (i) Electromagnetic governing interaction of electrically charged particles. (ii) Weak

nuclear—controlling things like burning of the sun (iii) Strong nuclear—holds nucleons together and (iv) Gravity—the interaction between the objects) are but one. After discovery of new particles the extremely rare building blocks of matter such as Bosons many physicists now believe that the universe is controlled by unified single force made up of a number inter-linked forces

This theory of equality of humanity was not merely propounded and preached, but also put into practice by Guru Nanak himself (i) He took Mardana (a muslim bard) as a friend and companion on his extensive tours. He visited sacred places of most of the religions in Asia, entered into discussions and exchange of ideas with various religious heads to thrash out the differences (ii) When he settled down at one place, he encouraged community dining ('guru ka langar'). 'Langar' became a symbol of equality and fraternity among his followers loosening the bonds of caste system. (iii) At congregations he started Pangat i.e, sitting at the same place and at the same level without demarcation of high or low status. (iv) Institution of 'Sangat' i.e. congregation for religious discourses at one particular place, without any caste distinctions.

The institutions of 'langar, pangat & sangat' have worked regularly since their foundation by Guru Nanak and are responsible for keeping the Sikh society both democratic and equalitarian.

(v) Guru Nanak recognized the importance of woman; not only as a procreator, but also as a source of nurture and sustenance of humanity; besides forming nearly fifty

percent of the human race numerically. He protested against the laws and systems (like Sati, female infanticide, segregation after child birth, deriding the rights of women as equal human beings. He put woman on a very high Pedestal saying, 'how can she be inferior who gives birth to kings Prophets, and leaders, and when the whole inter-relationship of humanity is through her medium?' According to him, woman is one half of the complete personality of man, and is entitled to share secular and spiritual knowledge with him. Without her participation in social and religious activities, man is incomplete and so is the society.

(iv) Guru Nanak declared, "one is not what one professes; one is what one's deeds are". No religion is high or low; there is only one fraternity, 'humanity' and only one faith 'humanism'. A disciple, a follower, a student is called 'Sikh' in the local language'. By usage, the word has now acquired a specific meaning, 'the disciple of Guru Nanak. Similarly the faith, 'humanism', got the name, 'Sikhism' (Dr. Gurbakhsh Singh. 'Sikh way of life ! Guru Nanak Dev Mission Series, Tract no 218). Guru Nanak left for all mankind a legacy which is still at work and shall continue to inspire and serve all humanity for all time to come.

Guru Angad (Second Nanak) invented Gurmukhi script of Punjabi language the mother tongue of masses. He extended the facilities of education and training for higher social and cultural life to the down trodden masses, irrespective of caste they belonged to. In this way he



shattered the monopoly of the Brahmins over spiritual and secular knowledge

Guru Amardas (third Nanak) built a deep well (Baoli Sahib) for use by the disciples of all religions & castes. While organising missionary work, he appointed 52 women out of 94 well-trained missionaries. This was a severe blow to the prevailing belief, 'Women cannot be spiritual teachers.' He fought against the cruel custom of 'Sati'. He opposed 'Purdah', and isolation of women and encouraged widow remarriage. These were concrete steps taken for emancipation of women, the exploited and suppressed half of the human race.

Guru Ramdas (fourth Nanak), set up an important missionary centre at Agra, under the great poet-philosopher, Bhai Gurdas. He founded the city of Amritsar and got dug the Holy tank with a shrine, (Hari-mandir) in the centre. This temple was kept open on all sides (It has four doors,) denoting cordial reception to all seekers of Truth without any reservations. He introduced eleven more Ragas (musical modes) in his composition than had been used by his predecessors and introduced new forms or poetic expressions in his hymns, thus increasing their appeal to the masses.

Guru Arjan Dev (fifth Nanak), constructed the holy tank dug by Guru Ramdas. The foundation-stone was laid by his Muslim friend, Hazrat Mian Mir. He compiled the Adi Granth, giving a scripture to the Sikhs. In compiling the Adi Granth, he kept in mind its spiritual profitableness and likely impact on the minds of the masses. To make it

a universal Bible, he included in it, compositions of saints & mystics of all religions, castes and social strata that had achieved perfection in spiritual sphere. He was the first Indian Martyr for the freedom of worship.

Guru Har Gobind (Sixth Nanak)'s role changed from mere preaching peacefully to the dauntless defence of faith in addition. Recognizing the necessity and judging the pulse of changing times, he donned sword. This was an incentive to the Sikhs to make a determined stand against all persecution and keep aloft the newest and latest philosophy of Guru Nanak

Guru Har Rai (seventh Nanak) reorganized missionary work inside and outside Punjab. His intense devotion to missionary work placed Guru Nanak's philosophy on a firm foundation

Guru Hari Krishan (eighth Nanak) set an example of service to the suffering and sick humanity. Guru Tegh Bahadur (ninth Nanak) undertook the task of moral and spiritual awakening of the nation. He toured the country and devoted his energy to alleviate the suffering and agony of the downtrodden masses and ensure their moral and spiritual regeneration. Religious freedom forms a natural corollary to the concept of equality of human beings in every sphere of life. Guru Tegh Bahadur took up the cudgels against the reign to implement this principle. In this struggle, he had to pay the highest price, and was beheaded for remaining steadfast to the principle of freedom of religion and freedom of worship for all.

Guru Gobind Singh (tenth Nanak) was a warrior-Saint and converted his followers into a nation of saint soldiers. The fate of future civilizations is not in the hands of mighty man, but in the hands of morally and spiritually awakened nations. God has reflected the whole cosmos in the human body incorporating 'the Divine spirit'. Human beings have to seek within to find it. This requires peaceful meditation in a conducive environment. Such an environment can be maintained by keeping the intruders at bay, may be with physical force. Hence both these functions were made a conjoint responsibility of one individual, thus laying the foundations of a complete and selfsufficient personality.

"Within forty two years of his stormy life Guru Gobind Singh's literary, philosophical and military genius worked wonders and established a philosophy of life, war and peace, the proper study and application of which alone can teach our troubled World the art of creating unity in diversity, and establishing peace through preparedness and tolerance and building a human society able to understand its past and present through the eternal values of truth; freedom and justice", [Dr. Trilochan Singh. 'Guru Gobind Singh (a brief life sketch.)]

Paradoxically enough, the image of Guru Gobind Singh is projected by some as a segregator—for creating a sect: but he was the one who vehemently emphasized the equality of all human beings, irrespective of caste, creed, nationality, colour and sex.

The founder of the Sikh faith, Guru Nanak Dev, postulated common source of origin of humanity and the Universe.

'First there was Divine Light  
Nature produced the whole human race.  
From ONE LIGHT is created the universe,  
Who is good ? who is bad ?'

Obviously, differences are invented by human beings themselves. Guru Gobind Singh further clarified this concept in "Akal Ustat (Praise of God)" chapter of his composition, "Eachitar Natak (wonderful drama)." A comprehensive account of this unity-concept is given in the poem mentioning geographical distribution and ethnic names, simultaneously highlighting the common bond between them, and the same thread running through all, to make a garland of different flowers. It reads as follows:—

'Some are Hindu, some Turk. Priest and Mulla,  
Consider human race as one.  
He is the Creator, He is the Provider and Merciful,  
There is no other secret: don't be misled by illusions.  
One God is every one's.  
Only One :image, One Light.  
Temple and mosque are for Him,  
so is puja and nemaz.  
different effects on one human race.  
Various daities of Hindus,  
Muslim mode of worship,  
are the influence of different countries  
and their mode of living."

Guru Gobind Singh makes it clear that the ultimate aim of humanity and other creatures is to communicate with their Creator. He further elucidates the Point, "the geographical influences and the urge to communicate with the Creator", in the following lines.

'Those living in the East, the Hinnalyas, think of You,  
fair complexioned English sing Thy praise.

Yatis, Yogis and many more perform penance,  
The Arabs of Arabia recite Your Name.

The French of France believe in You.

The Kandharis and the Qureshis know you.

The Westerners of the West recognize you,

The Marathas, the Meghala worship you ardently.

The Telangis also have place of worship,

The Bengalis of Bengal, the Ferangis of Ferang.

The Delhiwalas of Delhi, obey you,

The Rohelas and the Maghala warriors, the Bundhelas  
also differentiate between virtue and sin.

The Gurkhas praise Thy Creation, China &  
Manchuria bow to Thee,

The Tibetans too meditate.

Painful experiences spare no human body,

All those who meditate on You

attain full glory, are blessed with material  
comforts and flourish."

Another strong living proof of similarity is the human body itself. The structure of this wonder-machine is poetically depicted by Guru Gobind Singh. He says that the common Creator's handicraft and the framework and function are similar.

"Similar eyes, ears, body and power of speech;  
a combination of earth, air, fire and water.

Allah, Ishwar, Puran and Koran are the same.

All human beings are made in One image, with one construction.

But this human race is just one out of numerous other species in the universe. Species of the animals, aquatic creatures, insects, birds and plants comprise the other living beings. According to Guru Gobind Singh, leave alone the so called living beings; elements and matter also have the same origin and the same end. This common origin and end of every matter in the universe is beautifully picturized in the following lines;

"The way one spark lights many fires,  
individual flames leap up separately  
then sink back into the original fire.

The way one particle of dust raises a dust storm,  
then different particles settle and merge in the one  
basic dust.

The way numerous waves arise from a river,  
waves of the water will be called water only.  
The same way from the Universal Creator all objects  
are born,  
emerge from Him and are engulfed by Him.

In the present day world, when the countries try to dominate, races show off individual superiority; on the basis of caste, creed, colour and sex, fight for priorities; this philosophy propounded by Guru Gobind Singh, three centuries ago, is still a beacon of light in the pitch dark strife-torn atmosphere of the world. This message is not for the Sikhs alone it is for the inhabitants of the whole world.



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# About Ourselves

Guru Nanak Dev Mission came in to being in the year 1963 with the sole aim of imparting the message of Sikh Gurus to general public, and especially to the people of younger generation. For this end in view it provides reading material in form of booklets, every month, in Punjabi, English and Hindi.

The Mission is a non-profit organisation. None of its workers or executive members is a paid employee. Accordingly the booklets are made available for free distribution at mere cost price. Members of the Mission get these free of charge.

The life membership fee is Rs. 150/— in India and Rs. 300/- abroad for surface mail service and Rs. 500/— for Air mail. Annual subscription at home is 20/— only. At least 20 Publications are mailed annually. By now i. e. March, 1987 the Mission has published 310 booklets.

The following publications of the Mission are available for sale :

- |   |     |          |
|---|-----|----------|
| 1. A Peep into Sikhism by Late Bhai Ardaman Singh   |     | Rs. 3/—  |
| 2. One Guru one Movement by Late Bhai Ardaman Singh |     | Rs. 3/—  |
| 3. 'ਨਾਨਕ ਨਿਰਮਲ ਪੰਥ ਚਲਾਇਆ' ਲੇਖਕ ਭਾਈ ਨਰੈਣਸਿੰਘ         |     | Rs. 10/- |
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